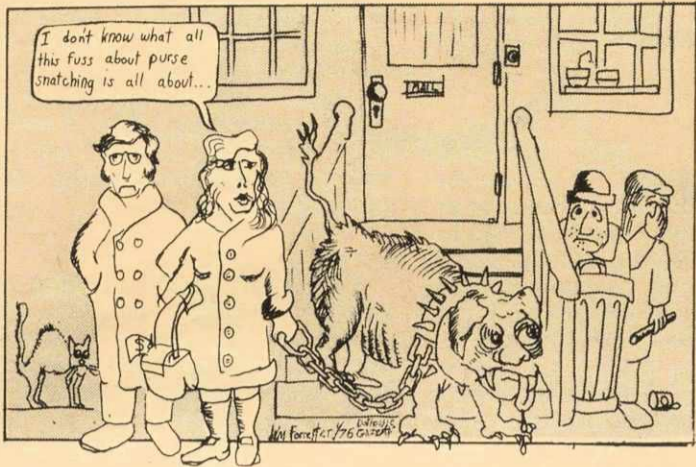


Purse thieves rampant in metro



by D. Moulton

According to local discotheque owners, the incidence of purse and coat thefts has greatly increased over the past year and is still on the rise. Donnie Hogan, owner of the Piccadilly Tavern & Discotheque, says that theft has always been a problem but it has become "rash of late".

The problem, according to Hogan, is not so much the thieves as the girls themselves. "The girls are creating the problem ... they come and leave money around. It's an invitation for somebody to take it." Jim Bent, Manager of Zapatas, agrees with Hogan in this respect, advising girls to place their purses in plain view of everybody if they're leaving the table. Even better, he suggests, girls should check their purses either at the coat check or behind the bar - a procedure he heartily endorses. If you are unable to check your purse/or coat, Bent suggests a bunny system be

arranged, thereby ensuring someone will be at the table at all times.

Bent, however, differs from Hogan in his view of the severity of the problem. He does not see it as increasing. The only problem Zapatas has is with band followings. "Depends on the group you have in, three or four bad eggs in that one bunch and ...". His waiters are told to watch all tables and be on the look-out for thieves. The last one caught was a male two months ago. Bob Lafagy, Night Manager at Dal, agrees with Bent, he is not aware that the problem is serious. Richard Coughlan, Entertainment Chairman, goes so far as to assert that the incidences are not as numerous as those of last year. The only thing Coughlan recommends is checking coats and perhaps purses at the enquiry desk, but he says the SUB will not be responsible for those purses.

Hogan has no solutions. "We'll try to contain it but ..." As for

lockers for purses, he says, "I can't afford to put in lockers. I can't even get people to hang up their coats." The solution, he believes, lies with the girls themselves. "The problem will never get better until girls stop being careless."

As for the police, they fail to see purse and coat snatching as a problem, according to Hogan. They are willing only to offer limited assistance, yet "people are making a living off it", says Hogan.

Although Dalhousie and Zapatas fail to see theft as an increasing problem, it almost undoubtedly is. The Gazette has evidence of single monetary losses as much as \$100 and cost losses amounting to well over \$800 in a night (seven leather coats stolen from Dal). The reason managers and fellow workers are unaware of these incidences is because of the apathy on the part of the person robbed. The general attitude is, "Oh, well, the money's gone, there's nothing that can be done now." It's this response that gives the crimes their success. Unless those robbed try to get their articles back, the number of thefts will increase. The police as well as the lounge owners must be informed. Hogan asserts that "if there's a purse lost, we know about it" but there were two shoved in the washroom trash can last Saturday that I'm sure he didn't know about and there will be more cases like that unless he, and the others, are informed of all losses. However, the best solution is, as all the Managers

maintain - precaution. Take all the necessary steps to ensure that you leave the night spot with all the possessions you had when you entered.

None of the Managers have any estimates as to how many wallets, purses and coats are stolen but, as Donnie Hogan says, "One a week is too many".

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Letters

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student fees last year - you remember - in the referendum where no one knew for sure what they were voting for. And, incidentally, no one knew for sure how to interpret the vote results either. In addition, NUS is in debt to the Dalhousie Student Council for \$2,250. We made the loan to tide NUS over in a financial crisis. My feeling, maybe a selfish one, is that we could use the money elsewhere, more to our own benefit.

Why am I against NUS? I have yet to see much action from NUS. They seem to be singularly lacking in leadership at the moment. In their August newsletter, there is a lot of space devoted to new members, conferences, fund raising, and one lone article on a brief presented to the Committee on Immigration. This seems to me to be a lot of emphasis on internal matters and very little on benefit outward to the members.

There are several reasons for my opposition to NUS. The first is the fact of non leadership. I am assured by NUS representatives that leadership is forthcoming. I certainly hope so because it is long overdue and I would hate to see our money go to waste. The second reason is that in order to leave NUS, we must hold a referendum. I feel that, as your elected representatives your Council should have the power to withdraw. Since the referendum to join NUS had such a great turnout (some reports tell me a little over 100 students voted), the need for a referendum to withdraw seems to me to be a safety measure written into the NUS Constitution (which was written by Dan O'Connor) to ensure that once a University joined, they stayed hooked.

At the meeting in which the motion was introduced, there were two NUS representatives present and I feel that this may have

influenced certain votes. However, I did accept the vote for the present, and will give NUS a bit more time, but I will not give up trying if they fail to perform satisfactorily. The Executive of your Council (excluding Mr. Crossman) spearheaded the debate against the motion at the meeting. This reminded me of the fond old days of the O'Connor administration. What Mr. Russell says seems to be law. Perhaps some support for my feelings comes from people who have attended NUS conferences. The feelings are mixed - some say they were good, others say they were a waste of time. I feel that we need a drastic review of the situation and a reassessment of our involvement in NUS.

Sincerely
Kevin Evans

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